

## Land Acknowledgment Statement - **Draft**

Long version: To be used on the website (a dedicated page that also includes links to more information and resources), perhaps it could also be printed and displayed in the Whitewater Room:

The Irvin L. Young Memorial Library acknowledges and honors that this institution exists today on land that was and remains the ancestral and historic territory of many Native peoples, including the Potawatomi and Ho-Chunk. We welcome the responsibility to share stewardship of these lands, and be good neighbors to all Wisconsin Indigenous populations.

We occupy a storied place. Indigenous peoples of the past left behind their stories infused in this land. By the time Europeans came to the area now known as Whitewater, the early mound building cultures had disappeared, leaving traces of their sacred rituals on the land. The Potawatomi, then closely related to the Ojibwa and Odawa peoples, called this land home. The Ho-Chunk grew corn and gathered a living from these lands.

Not all came to this place voluntarily. Some were forced into what we now call Wisconsin. Some were forced across it. Some were forced out of it and found ways to return. We need to know the stories of this land and its people. We need to know how beginning in 1804 land was relinquished by tribal nations in treaties whose terms were unfair and not upheld; and how land was also taken by force. Settler colonizers representing the government carried out genocide, ethnic cleansing, and forced removal. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 was used to enable many atrocities. The land taken was divided and used for military purposes, or commerce, or for white settlers. The First Nations lost water rights and access to their homes, the places where their ancestors lived and rested. The legal, financial, and social consequences of these removals continue. We invite you to learn more about the genocide and forced displacement by non-Native settlers, and the ongoing injustices against Native peoples.

As a public institution that provides access to resources and information for lifelong learning, it is the library's responsibility to acknowledge the historical context of the land we use, to promote dialogue and connection across cultures, and to recognize and promote the recognition of the truthful history of our community and country. We honor the First Nations of Wisconsin with our commitment to providing equitable and inclusive access and opportunities for all whom the library serves.

Shortened version: To be used before programs, for example.

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DRAFT



Irvin L. Young  
Memorial Library

**Our Commitment to Action**

The Irvin L. Young Memorial Library is actively and consistently working toward:

- Maintaining an authentic collection that includes Indigenous authors and illustrators in all areas of the library's collection. Ensuring that money in our collection development budget is allocated specifically for this purpose.
- Creating a dedicated space on our website for our full land acknowledgment statement that also includes additional information and links to local First Nations history (including book lists and highlights from our library's collection) and current issues for further research and education.
- Creating a space in our local history collection, The Whitewater Room, for a display of our full land acknowledgment statement and additional information to highlight authentic Indigenous voices in our collection and recognize the truthful history of our community and country.
- Hosting programs in collaboration with Indigenous presenters, performers, educators, and leaders in order to educate and promote dialogue and connection across cultures. Ensuring that money in our programming budget is allocated specifically for this purpose.
- Seeking opportunities to form partnerships with other local organizations in order to provide education and programming focused on Indigenous culture. Ensuring that grants are written specifically for this purpose (i.e. Wisconsin Humanities Grant).
- Seeking input, guidance, and collaboration with the Ho-Chunk, Potawatomi, and other local Indigenous people in all areas of our library work.